



**Remarks by Ambassador Lewis Lukens  
Vermont Army National Guard  
Closing ceremony  
Mess des Officiers, Dakar - April 26, 2013**

*(As prepared)*

Major General Sow, Colonel Koundoul and Colonel Wade, members of the Vermont Military Engagement Team, Senegalese Military emergency Planners,

For the past 2 weeks, the Vermont Army National Guard's Military Engagement Team in collaboration with the Senegalese military civil response planners have been discussing how Military forces operate as part of a larger national effort characterized as *unified action*—the synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort that supports effective military support to civil authority.

All branches of the military must integrate their actions and operations within this larger framework, collaborating with entities outside their direct control. Nowhere is this truer than in crisis response and incident management, in which military forces conduct unified operations to integrate fully with national preparedness efforts.

The Vermont National Guard has a rich history of Military Support to Civil Authority and Disaster Response. They have responded to many incidents both large and small within the state borders and to national catastrophic events. In 2011, the Guard responded to Hurricane Irene which devastated Southern Vermont causing loss of life, loss of property and significant infrastructure destruction. This seamless application of military assets didn't happen by accident. It happened when military and civilian planners came together, planned using all hazards approaches for the most likely scenario.

The government of Senegal sees the benefit of this planning focus. They have identified the most likely disaster planning scenarios such as annual floods, fire response, route clearance and electrical mitigation as areas that their armed forces will be able to assist in government efforts to mitigate when they happen. They are looking at successful models of incident management, developed and tested in real world situations. They see the need for innovative solutions to complex challenges. They see a place for the careful employment of their military as a method of organized response to natural disasters which will ultimately save Senegalese lives and preserve infrastructure. Ultimately, I hope that this work started with the Vermont National Guard will provide the Senegalese Armed Forces with the framework for development of their own successful systems so that they can plan and respond appropriately in an all hazards environment.

For our friends from Vermont, I hope that these last few weeks have provided you with a significant appreciation of the Senegalese people, her military, and her culture; and that you were the recipient of the world famous Senegal Terranga. I urge you to maintain contact with your new friends.

For our Senegalese partners, I hope that this experience has provided insights on systems of disaster response that work well in the United States. This will serve you well as you move forward with your own planning and development process in Military Support to Civil Authority.

This 21 day visit by the Vermont Army National Guard is a great step forward to a continued relationship to assist Senegal with Emergency Management, in order to save lives and develop capabilities.